

# ECOD NEWS

Winter 2009  
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ERIE COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE DISABLED

95 Franklin Street • Room 626 • Buffalo, NY 14202



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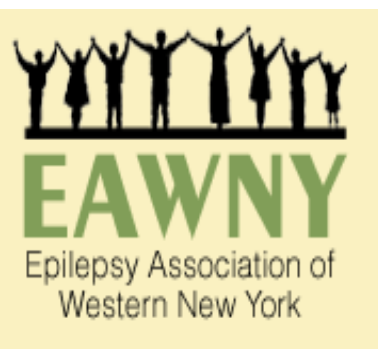


Angel Flight Northeast is a non-profit organization that provides free air transportation for people who need to travel to other cities for medical treatment. They also transport people to visit loved ones that are ill in other cities. Their volunteer pilots fly those who turn to them for help free of charge.

Joe DeMarco is a local volunteer pilot and director for Angel Flight NE. He recently flew a local family to Virginia seven times to

visit their son, who was injured in Iraq. Since May, 1996, Angel Flight NE has answered over 50,000 flight requests and have flown over 7.7 million miles, all with a mission to serve those in need.

For flight requests call 1-800-549-9980 or visit their website at [www.angelflightne.org](http://www.angelflightne.org). You may also contact Joe DeMarco (our local volunteer) at (716) 667-0815 for information or a presentation.



The Epilepsy Association of WNY, Inc., is a not for profit organization that has been providing services to individuals diagnosed with epilepsy and their families since 1947. The mission of the Epilepsy Association is to assist individuals and their families who are coping with and adjusting to

the diagnosis of epilepsy/seizure disorders lead more independent, productive and satisfying lives. To fulfill this mission a qualified staff of professionals provides services to individuals, their families and to the community at large.

Parenting children with epilepsy can intensify an already complex task. Services are available to the family to provide information, support, advocacy and awareness to assist the family and the child through the adjustment process.  
**(Article continued on Page 2)**



As the number of Autism incidents continue to increase, so does a Western New York agency that has built a community of people on the Autism Spectrum. Since 1982, Autistic Services, Inc. has been Western New York's only agency that focuses exclusively on providing services to adults and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. What began as a 12 month education program has since expanded into a plethora of educational and quality of life programs. Most notably are the agency's growing Arts and Humanities Programs, which have become a community hallmark for Autistic Services.

"The Arts have always been universal," says Veronica Federiconi, the Executive Director of Autistic Services. "Language itself can be a barrier between people. Many people with Autism are non-verbal. But they can paint, draw, or perform music; all of which are beyond the impediment of words." By the close of 2008, well over a dozen venues in the Greater Buffalo area were home to Autistic Services' traveling art exhibitions and

musical and play performances. 2009 has already welcomed the agency with a growing list of new venues.

For young children through adulthood, Autistic Services functions as a school with a specialized curriculum and staff members who are trained to work with this special needs population. Once graduated from the school program, the student may continue in the adult Day Hab Program, which involves continued support in self-care and integration with the community. With two new facilities set to open in Buffalo and Williamsville, the goal of community exposure and integration is beginning to be realized.

Autistic Services is located at 4444 Bryant Stratton Way in Williamsville, NY. More information about the agency can be found at their website at [www.autisticservices.org](http://www.autisticservices.org) or by visiting their community website at [www.friendsofasi.org](http://www.friendsofasi.org).

## Epilepsy Association

(Article continued from Page 1)

Some individuals with epilepsy are in need of more comprehensive services to meet their needs. The agency's Medicaid Service Coordination Program utilizes experienced professional service coordinators to help individuals through this process.

The Epilepsy Association also offers a unique neuro-behavioral treatment program as a supplement to physician care to assist with seizure control and stress management. This program utilizes biofeedback techniques, guided imagery, progressive relaxation and the techniques of HeartMath to help individuals cope more effectively with the stressors that may trigger seizures.

Adult counseling services focus on a positive adjustment to the diagnosis of epilepsy and the experience of living with seizures. An individual's specific problems are addressed and may include referral to the agency's employment specialist to assist with help in finding and maintaining employment.

The Epilepsy Association's community education program provides current information on the causes and treatment of epilepsy as well as proper first aid procedures. This information is provided to social service agencies, public and private schools, area businesses and health service providers. These presentations are designed specifically for the audience being served.

For more information on any service provided by the Epilepsy Association, please call (716) 883-5396.



# People and Places

## Vacations for Fun & Friendship!

As the snow is blowing and the winter cold sets in for us here in western New York, our new catalog of vacations for 2009 is ready to mail! It is a great time of year to shift our thoughts to the warmer days and the many vacations that happily await.

For those of you unfamiliar with us, People and Places is a not-for-profit agency which has been providing vacations for adults with developmental disabilities since 1975. With over 100 small group trips each year to destinations from coast to coast and around the world, we love to provide lots of choices for a diversity of interests.

Choices range from warm retreats to earth-friendly resorts - from adventures in the old west to haunted holidays - from cruises to journeys in far-away lands. For vacationers who wish to engage in special interest experiences, there are adventures with dolphins or whales, trains or country music - historical places or our magnificent national parks. Of course, there are always trips to visit with the characters of Disney to bring a smile or the warmth of Caribbean islands to warm the body, or animal rescue to warm one's heart.

Whatever the interest, we probably have a wonderful vacation just waiting - or we can create one!

Be sure to see our new catalog of vacations for 2009. Some of this year's new choices are: River Cruising in the 1000 Islands, the world's largest Elvis Festival, the Ultimate Pennsylvania Train Adventure, Fishing off the Gulf Coast of Florida, and exploring Scotland with its castles and the mystery of Loch Ness are just a few new ones.

We love providing unique special interest trips and always welcome your thoughts and ideas. If you are not already on our mailing list you may email us or give us a call with your name and address and we'll be sure that you receive our new catalog of vacations for 2009. We appreciate your interest and are happy to answer your questions. We can be reached at phone # 716-496-8826 or our web site [www.people-and-places.org](http://www.people-and-places.org). Regarding this article, please email us at: [vacations@people-and-places.org](mailto:vacations@people-and-places.org). Our address is: People and Places, 76 Riley Street, East Aurora, NY 14052.

## Assistance Available –

Housing rehabilitation assistance for owner-occupied, one- to four- family homes is available from the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (ECDEP). The Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program allows low and moderate-income homeowners to make essential repairs to their home at an affordable cost. With low interest repayable or deferred loans, and the assistance of experienced staff, the worry is taken out of home repairs. Eligible repairs include re-roofing, energy conservation, siding replacement, updating of mechanical systems, and essential handicapped accessibility work.

The program covers all areas of Erie County except for the City of Buffalo, and Towns of Tonawanda, Amherst, Cheektowaga and Hamburg. Repayment and interest rate for the loan is determined by household income. The program is funded by the United States Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, administered through ECDEP. If you would like more information, please contact Robert Kilduff, Senior Housing

## Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

Rehabilitation Specialist, at (716) 858-7490, or visit the Department of Environment and Planning on the web at:

[http://www.erie.gov/environment/planning\\_ecdev/communitydev\\_housing.asp](http://www.erie.gov/environment/planning_ecdev/communitydev_housing.asp)

Also available is a Housing Accessibility Program, which helps low to moderate-income homeowners who are wheelchair users make accessibility improvements to their home; for example-access ramp installation or re-plumbing of kitchen and bath for improved access. Other programs offered include a First Time Homebuyer Program, which helps low and moderate-income households with closing costs and down payment, and a mobile home repair assistance program that allows households residing in a mobile home to make necessary repairs. For all programs, assessment for lead based paint hazards may be necessary. For general information please contact the Department of Environment and Planning at (716) 858-8390.

# Weatherization Program

## **What is the Weatherization Referral and Packaging Program? (WRAP Program)**

WRAP is a federally-funded energy assistance program designed to help HEAP eligible households with their energy-related problems or needs. The program is unique to New York State and administered locally by the Erie County Department of Senior Services.

## **Who is Eligible for the WRAP Program?**

Eligibility is based upon gross family income and household size. Anyone who lives in Erie County in a household that meets the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) criteria is potentially eligible for WRAP. If you own your own home or mobile home or even if you live in an apartment building up to four units, you may be eligible for help.

## **What Type of Assistance Will I Receive?**

If you are experiencing a cold, drafty house in the winter or your heating bills are skyrocketing, a WRAP representative will talk to you and will help you pull together energy services in the community that can help you. WRAP services generally include installing insulation, caulking, weather stripping and testing of heating systems.



## **How Long Will the Process Take?**

Generally, the process may take anywhere from 6-9 months from start up to completion. However, due to current demand, it may be up to two years for completion.

## **How Do I Apply?**

Call the Erie County Department of Senior Services Information and Assistance Unit at (716) 858-8526, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

*The Erie County Office for the Disabled makes no endorsement of products or programs described.  
This publication is for informational purposes only.*

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